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THE MEDO-PERSIAN CEREMONIAL: XENOPHON, CYRUS AND THE KING'S BODY

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The *Cyropaedia* is a long text involving many different approaches; and yet there is a major split in the work: the taking of Babylon which, at the end of Book 7, marks the end of Cyrus' military conquest. Indeed, while throughout the first part, the young conqueror was at the head of a kind of "travelling Republic"¹ and was deliberately rejecting the slightest display of luxury, the circumstances turn to be entirely different with the defeat and the fall of the enemy capital town. Cyrus settles down in the palace under Hestia's patronage.² The last conquests are swiftly reported in just a few sentences.³ And then, a crucial pattern appears, the development of which gives a framework to the whole beginning of Book 8: the notion that the sovereign must be very parsimonious and cautious in his public appearances.

Immediately after the end of the final struggles, "Cyrus conceived a desire to establish himself as he thought became a king (*hôs basilei hêgeito prepein*) [...] in such a way that his public appearances should be *rare and solemn* (*spanios te kai semnos*) and yet excite as little jealousy (*epiphthonôs*) as possible" (7.5.37). For Xenophon's Cyrus, monarchy requires a certain degree of pomp. As P. Carlier puts it, "the verb *prepein* must be taken in its strongest meaning: the lack of pomp would be *inappropriate* and shocking" (Carlier 1978: 149). The etiquette and magnificence (*semnotês*) of his outward appearance are a major component of Cyrus' new power and one of his favourite means of ruling the huge territory which is now under his leadership. This is the context within which the luxurious ceremonial adopted by Cyrus and his circle, as it is described by Xenophon (8.1.40-43), comes to take on its meaning: from then on, the conqueror decides to wear the Median dress, as well as shoes with thick soles, and to make up his eyes.

For a long time, scholars have been puzzled by this adoption of Eastern pomp – apparently praised by Xenophon. In order to elude the questions raised by this part of the text, some doubts have sometimes been expressed as to its authenticity.⁴ Yet, this "suspect" episode is confirmed by another one (8.3.1-3), in which the author strongly stresses the adoption of the Median ceremonial. Xenophon is obviously using the latter as an element of a deliberate ideological strategy: in his idealized picture, he could indeed have rejected this adoption of an equivocal practice after Cyrus' death, all the more as Herodotus does not credit the founder of the Persian Empire with this innovation, but attributes it to a Median King, Deiokes. An answer to the questions raised by Xenophon in this passage can be gained only through a deeper analysis of the intellectual context within which the work has been written. Therefore, the viewpoint of this study is not that of the Iranists who seek to determine what credit is to be given to Xenophon's work when one wants to write the history of the Achaemenid Empire – even though a fruitful approach to this question of the ceremonial is equally relevant from that point of view.⁵ The aim here is rather to shed some light on a Greek intellectual debate, within which the adoption of a "barbarian" ceremonial comes to take on a particular meaning.

Some interpreters have avoided the problem by assuming that Xenophon mentioned this

episode in order to suggest that he was himself keeping his hero at a distance for moral reasons (see Carlier 1978, Gera 1993: 291-292 and recently, Too 1998: 287). In adopting the Median outfit, Cyrus would only be more rapidly led to give up the plain and stern "Persian style" described at the beginning of the work. This approach, initiated by Leo Strauss, is based on the underlying assumption that, in order to interpret the *Cyropaedia* correctly, one should be able to read "between the lines".⁶ From such a viewpoint, the adoption of the ceremonial would be one element of the ironical complicity⁷ between Xenophon and his Greek readers. He would be underlining in an implicit way the troubles resulting from such a change in the way of ruling. Many other scholars have reacted vigorously against this kind of interpretation, pointing out the lack of explicit evidence and the interpretative gap it implies.⁸ On the other hand, different answers have been put forward to solve the difficulties of interpretation which seem to be raised by the adoption of the Median ceremonial in the *Cyropaedia*.⁹ In such a context, an attempt to throw some light on the exact meaning of this ceremonial may allow us to define more precisely the interpretative stakes of the work itself.

Firstly, when reading this text, we are led to raise the problem of "pomp" in fourth century Greece: how does an oligarchic thinker conceive the relationship between pomp and authority? Within what frame is a spectacular performance to be displayed? Who is to take part in it? To the benefit (and at the expense) of whom are those imposing performances enacted?

We will assume that this adoption of a foreign ceremonial by Xenophon's hero has a political meaning, and not a moral one. As B. Due reminds us, "whether Xenophon actually approved of the measures taken by Cyrus we cannot know and it is not important. What is important is to realize that he was interested in and understood the psychological mechanisms behind the strange customs he met in Persia" (Due 1989: 220 n.40). This pomp is a new governmental *technê*, which is related to Cyrus' settling in his palace; it is also linked to his wish to deal with issues of imperial deportment and of territorial security and no longer with military problems. As a matter of fact, if "it is a great thing to have won an empire, it is a still greater thing to preserve it after it has been won" (*Cyropaedia* 7.5.76).

As it is meant to submit the subjects' bodies to discipline by means of the use of prostration (8.3.14), the ceremonial required by Xenophon's Cyrus symmetrically introduces a reflection about the body of the sovereign himself and "the means whereby a man knows how to regulate his body well".¹⁰ For Xenophon, the problem is to find a good and exact balance between what is required by the ruling of such a huge empire – which obliges the ruler to resort to luxurious pomp – and those requirements imposed by the ruling of his own body¹¹ – and, especially, the necessary inner asceticism of a good leader.

I. THE CEREMONIAL: HOW TO MASTER ILLUSION

A. *Cyrus the trickster*

Whereas his mother Mandane had precisely warned him against such an evolution when Cyrus was still a child (1.3.18), after the taking of Babylon the latter seems to adopt deliberately the customs he had known in Media, at his grandfather's home, at a crucial moment of his *paideia*.¹² To describe the adopted ceremonial, the vocabulary of illusion and of make-believe is systematically resorted to:¹³ the purpose is always to be impressive and to enhance, by all possible ways, the majesty of the royal person. Illusion and public performance are always united in a dialectical way in the royal pomp which Cyrus chooses to adopt.

The wearing of the Median dress, which has only an ethnographical interest in Herodotus' *Histories*, perfectly fits with this new political use of the royal image described in the *Cyropaedia*: Cyrus thought "that if any one had any personal defect, that dress would help conceal it, and that it made the wearer look very tall and very handsome" (8.1.40). In quite the same way, "the shoes of such a form that without being detected the wearer can easily put something into the soles so as to make him look taller than he is" (8.1.41), are part of this performance staged by the sovereign.¹⁴ Then, "the fashion of pencilling the eyes, that they might seem more lustrous than they are, and of using cosmetics (*entribesthai*) to make the complexion look better than nature made it (*hôs eukhrôoteroi horônto ê pephukasin*)" (8.1.42) reiterates this illusory relationship with reality.¹⁵ These deceptive manners have a political purpose which is to contribute "to their appearing to their subjects as men who could not lightly be despised" (8.1.42). There has been a shift from a logic of being to a logic of appearance, as if, gradually, the new requirements of imperial ruling led to unavoidable adaptations: "We think, furthermore, that we have observed in Cyrus that he held the opinion that a ruler ought to excel his subjects not only in point of being actually better than they, but that he ought also to cast a sort of spell (*katagoêteuein*) upon them" (8.1.40).¹⁶

Yet the only other occurrence of a term based on *goêteia* in Xenophon – in the *Anabasis* – raises a doubt about the legitimacy of using such means. On the way back to the Black Sea, there was a rumour going around in the Greek army that Xenophon wanted to deceive his troop (*exapatêsas*: 5.7.5) instead of driving them back to Greece; and this, with the purpose to draw them into a new adventure towards the river Phasis. In order to restore the situation, Xenophon is compelled to deliver them a reassuring speech: "But suppose you have been deceived and bewitched by me (*goêteuthentas hup'emou*) and we have come to the Phasis (...) I, who have done the deceiving will be one lone man, while you, the deceived, will be close to ten thousand, with arms in your hands" (*Anabasis* 5.7.9).¹⁷ Therefore, casting a sort of spell is not a device to be used with the Greeks, least of all in front of an army.¹⁸

Putting this scene in relation to the adoption of the Median ceremonial may seem, at first sight, rather difficult. Was Xenophon caught up by History? Did he feel obliged – especially because of his own memory of Herodotus' work as well as of his own experience of the Persian world – to mention a far from brilliant aspect of the reign of Cyrus, with that adoption of this delusive attire?¹⁹ Did he choose, in doing so, to hint, "between the lines", that he was keeping his hero at a distance?

B. *The hidden king*

Cyrus seems to come to a dead end. Indeed, besides the deceptive aspect of ceremonials, by taking up a new way of life, he created a clear-cut separation between the king and his countrymen.²⁰ Yet, in the *Agesilaus* and the *Memorabilia*, two other books by Xenophon, on the contrary, a charismatic leader is supposed to be approachable. A close comparison with the *Agesilaus* shows that the decision to remain distant can be considered to lead to a political deadlock. In the *Agesilaus* indeed, Xenophon underlines the flaws of a kingdom in which the king seldom appears in public. Furthermore, Xenophon even draws a parallel with the situation in Persia. According to him, Agesilaus would have a lifestyle in complete contrast to the boastful pomp of the Great King (*têi tou Persou alazoneiai*) who was criticized for his infrequent public appearances: "In the first place the Persian [king] thought his dignity required that he should be seldom seen (*ho men tô spaniôs horasthai esemnuneto*): Agesilaus delighted to be constantly visible (*aei emphanês*), believing that, whereas secrecy was becoming to an ugly career (*aiskhrourgiai men to aphanizesthai prepein*), the light shed lustre (*kosmon*) on a life of noble purpose" (*Agesilaus* 9.1).²¹

The same terms, *spanios*, *semnos*, *kosmos* and *prepein*, can therefore be found in both books – *Cyropaedia* 7.5.35 and *Agesilaus* 11.1 – but they are organised in a diametrically opposed fashion. In the *Cyropaedia* the emphasis is laid on the idea of making few but impressive appearances, *spanios te kai semnos*, both terms being involved in a dialectical relationship since the scarcity of the king's public appearances makes them all the more exceptional and memorable. In the *Agesilaus*, on the other hand, prestige is achieved by the king's maximum availability. *Aiskhrourgia*, infamy, is what *befits* someone who makes infrequent appearances and who stays confined in his palace: once more, one sees the term *prepein* which needs to be understood in the fullest sense of the word, as being critical of the monarchical lifestyle. The Great King's *semnotês* means to be "invested with an invaluable dignity which, as it fully relies on pomp, conceals the individual's inner void".²² For Xenophon's *Agesilaus*, the king's body is better dressed in a harsh and unceasing flow of light than in deceptive clothing.

As it is presented at the beginning of the *Memorabilia*, Socrates' character apparently comes to be seen as inevitably accessible, just like Agesilaus: "Socrates lived ever in the open (*en tôi phanerôi*); for early in the morning he went to the public promenades and training-grounds (*phaneros*) (...) and the rest of the day he passed just where most people were to be met" (*Memorabilia* 1.1.10). Socrates leads a transparent lifestyle and tries to keep a balance between two extreme positions: "as some will do or say anything in a crowd (*en okhlôi*) with no sense of shame (*oud'aiskhron*), while others shrink even from going abroad among men (*oud'exitêteon eis anthrôpous*)" (1.1.14). Whereas, in Babylon, Cyrus takes up the latter attitude as he thinks up a ploy to isolate himself from his subjects, Socrates refuses to shirk other people's opinion and control.

However, Socrates' historical figure urges us to ponder further the alleged political relevance of a person's accessibility. Indeed, the philosopher was sentenced to death in spite of his (allegedly) irreproachable behaviour in public life, when he should have been vindicated by his very demeanour (*Memorabilia* 1.1.17). One may put forward the hypothesis that Xenophon was strongly impressed by the lesson taught him by Socrates. Indeed, did he not learn then that behaving in a virtuous and pious way in public was not enough? Does it not seem necessary then to lend weight to a man's authority by carefully staging it, in order to defuse any feeling of envy that his success might

foster?²³ Within a context in which total visibility is the rule, the jury's furious accusations directed against the philosopher can be explained only by jealousy, *phthonos*: how would one otherwise understand the fact that Socrates' life was not a sufficiently explicit expression of his demeanour, as was the case with Agesilaus (see also *Agesilaus*, 5.6-7)? As a matter of fact, in the *Cyropaedia*, Cyrus' decision is mostly based on his fear of arousing envy: Cyrus wants to appear "in such a way that his public appearances should be rare and solemn and yet excite as little jealousy (*epiphthonôs*) as possible" (7.5.37). When devising the ceremonial, Cyrus takes into consideration the basest aspects of human life in order to establish a new royal lifestyle. Besides, it is a fact that, in spite of all his efforts, Socrates was seen by some Athenians as a man who was wont to display a presumptuous form of dignity, a bad *semnotês*.²⁴ As N. Loraux writes, Socrates would walk about the streets of Athens and he would "put on airs (*semnoprosopeis*)": such behaviour greatly irritated Aristophanes, and the playwright Kallias himself accused him of having taught his demeanour to his followers;²⁵ Xenophon writes that, during his trial, "Socrates, by exalting himself before the court, brought ill-will (*phthonos*) upon himself and made his conviction by the jury more certain" (*Apology* 32).

In the light of the *Memorabilia*, one realizes that, in some cases, the best way to avoid appearing "pompous" is to control public appearances and to carry out a rational organisation of ceremonials. Within the context of the *Cyropaedia*, the Median ceremonial is based on a government *technê* which allows one to channel envy, *phthonos*, once conquest is completed.

C. From Persia to Greece

At the time when he wrote the *Cyropaedia*, Xenophon might have been disappointed by Sparta (e.g. Bizos 1973: 46-47). That would explain why Lacedemonian royal austerity, as it is portrayed more particularly in the *Agesilaus*, is an exceptional attitude that Cyrus chooses not to take up in the *Cyropaedia*, once the empire is established.²⁶ Incidentally, this austere Lacedemonian solution does not correspond to any Greek ideology, especially not one which would stand in sharp contrast with the conception of Achaemenid pomp. A quick comparison may thus be drawn between Cyrus' sumptuous procession in Babylon (8.3.9-24) and the processions taking place during the festivals as Xenophon shows in *The Cavalry Commander* (3.1-14). This comparison unveils many similarities: one observes the same ritual aim (*Cyropaedia* 8.3.24; *Cavalry Commander* 3.1), a similar degree of visual illusion,²⁷ the presence in both cases of strategies of distinction,²⁸ and above all the same degree of solemnity: "how imposing (*semnon*) when [the regiments] stand facing one another again" (*Cavalry Commander*, 3.12). Just like the *Cyropaedia*, *The Cavalry Commander* therefore provides Xenophon with the opportunity to link the issue of pomp with that of deceit and the necessity for distinction.

As a matter of fact, pomp is discarded in the Greek world only inasmuch as it aims at satisfying private ends beyond the limits set up by public rules.²⁹ One can then put forward the following hypothesis: far from establishing an ironic distance with his hero, in fact, by making Cyrus take up Median pomp, Xenophon is exercising a pragmatic reflection on the role of ceremonials and on the contexts within which they are allowed.

II. THE KING AND HIS COURT IN BABYLON

A. *Finding the right distance*

The role played by the ceremonial must be reconsidered in relation to the new situation after Babylon is conquered: contrary to what was going on with the army during the war, when it was of the utmost importance for the chief to be immediately accessible, in the new empire, a special place called the court is established exclusively for the king and his followers; whereas the distance between people within the court is progressively abolished, the gap between it and the outside world increases all the more. Cyrus tells us why he had not established such a separation when he was still waging war: "Perhaps someone may ask why I did not adopt this arrangement in the beginning instead of making myself accessible to all (*pareikhon en tõi mesõi emauton*). It was, I answer, because I realized that the demands of war (*ta tou polemou toiauta onta*) made it necessary (...) And I thought generals who were seldom to be seen (*tous de spanious idein stratêgous*) often neglected much that needed to be done" (*Cyropaedia* 7.5.46).³⁰ Beyond Xenophon's well-known equivalence between the various spheres in which authority can be exercised, at the same time, the specificity of each sphere is examined and pondered upon.³¹

This hypothesis could be substantiated by a comparison with the *Oeconomicus*. The parallelism between the adoption of the Median ceremonial (8.1.40-42) and Ischomachus's chiding his wife about making up (10.2-8) has been drawn quite a long time ago.³² Ischomachus, an expert on the subject of agricultural techniques and Xenophon's spokesman in the book, tells Socrates how one day his young wife had tried to make herself more attractive; "I noticed that her face was made up: she had rubbed in white lead in order to look even whiter than she is, and alkanet juice to heighten the rosy colour of her cheeks; and she was wearing boots with thick soles to increase her height" (*Oeconomicus* 10.2).³³ The parallel or rather the sharp contrast with the passage in the *Cyropaedia* is striking: Cyrus and his fellow men "wear shoes which can be fitted soles in order to make them look taller without anyone noticing it. Then, [Cyrus] tolerated eye shadow so that they looked like they had more beautiful eyes than in reality and he also accepted make-up so that their complexion would seem to be more beautiful than it really was" (8.1.41).

However, Ischomachus precisely complains about this kind of custom, and this has induced a few commentators to consider the passage from the *Cyropaedia* to be apocryphal. Yet, he does not so much disapprove of the use of cosmetics themselves as of their use within an intimate context: "tricks (*apatai*) like these may serve to gull outsiders (*tous men exô*), but people who live together are bound to be found out, if they try to deceive one another" (*Oeconomicus* 10.8). Through his spokesman Ischomachus, Xenophon even draws up a real topography of private life, of those places and situations in which absolute intimacy can be found: "For they are found out while they are dressing in the morning; they perspire and are lost; a tear convicts them; the bath reveals them as they are!" (*Oeconomicus* 10.8).³⁴

All the same, his criticism does not boil down to a mere moral disapproval: Ischomachus indeed appeals to his wife's common sense. Within a context of intimacy, those deceptions are immediately disclosed and besides they turn out to be necessarily "counterproductive": someone who uses such ploys is then likely to lose the respect of his nearest and dearest.³⁵

As a matter of fact, the transparency typical of the *oikos* (at least in Xenophon's ideological reconstruction) is echoed by the "face to face society"³⁶ embodied by the army at war before Babylon was taken, the army in which such tricks are similarly forbidden. At the beginning of the book, Cambyzes thus attempts to talk his son out of using tricks meant to make him look better than his subjects: "not long after, when you were giving an exhibition of your skill, you would be shown up and convicted, too, as an impostor" (*Cyropaedia* 1.6.22). Just as in the *Oeconomicus*, deceit is not criticized on moral grounds but in terms of mere effectiveness within a context of visibility. One would see through the deceiver in no time, above all because the leader of an army finds himself under close scrutiny: he is always sure "that nothing he does escapes notice" (*Cyropaedia* 1.6.25).³⁷ In such a situation, just as in the case of Ischomachus' wife, it would be sheer madness to establish ceremonials without being able to control their side effects. As a matter of fact, in the *Cyropaedia*, irony can be felt when he describes Cyaxares, the Median uncle, still sitting enthroned on his chair *in the midst of the military campaign*: "Meantime, Cyaxares came out in gorgeous attire (*semnôs kekosmênôs*) and seated himself on a Median throne" (*Cyropaedia* 6.1.6). As always in Xenophon's account, Cyrus' uncle takes action at the wrong moment and establishes an ill-timed distance while war is in full swing. He even makes his friends wait for him, which induces the fighters to turn to Cyrus who is himself always present and accessible:³⁸ "While Cyaxares was attiring himself (for he heard that there was a large concourse of people at his doors), various friends were presenting the allies to Cyrus" (*Cyropaedia* 6.1.1).³⁹ In such a situation, Cyaxares' behaviour is likely to look like that of the "wives who sit about like fine ladies (*ai d'aei kathêmenai semnôs*)" and who "expose themselves to comparison with painted and fraudulent hussies", to borrow Ischomachus' words to his wife (*Oeconomicus* 10.13).

On the other hand, after Babylon is taken, in the pacified empire, controlled and effective ceremonials are made possible. However, tricks are then aimed only at those who are not part of the sovereign's new court. Indeed, since the members of the court constantly live together – like Ischomachus and his wife – a ploy of this kind cannot be tolerated.

The great procession (*Cyropaedia* 8.3) must be interpreted as the first real performance of the Median ceremonial which was meant "to cast a sort of spell (*katagoêteuein*) upon the subjects" (8.1.40). The adoption of the ceremonial and the procession are linked by the same semantic field. Indeed, Xenophon writes about the procession: "the magnificence (*semnotês*) of his appearance in state seems to us to have been one of the arts that he devised to make his government command respect (*mê eukataphronêton einai*) [not lightly despised]" (8.3.1). Thanks to a significant echo, the author here sends us back to the adoption of the Median ceremonial as described in 8.1.40-42: "All this he thought contributed, in some measure, to their appearing to their subjects men who could not lightly be despised (*eis to duskataphronêtoterous phainesthai tois arkhomenois*)". Besides, it is made clear in the text that Persians were clad in the Median dress for the first time in the procession. As is his wont, after mentioning a decision taken or after elaborating a theory, Xenophon shows how changes are enacted in concrete terms.

Within such a context, the solemn procession appears to be a concrete enforcement of the aforementioned distinction between the inside and the outside, between courtiers and the other subjects. Indeed, the procession is about "going out", going out of the palace towards the *exô*, the outside world.⁴⁰ As it is described, everything is set for the procession to meet the criteria for a successful sham as hinted in the *Oeconomicus*: first of all, the procession aims at deceiving "the

outsiders", the subjects of defeated Babylon. Then, the organisation of the procession guarantees that the king's privacy will be preserved since the crowd is kept at a distance: "rows of soldiers stood on this side of the street and on that, just as even to this day the Persians stand, where the king is to pass; and within these lines no one may enter except those who hold positions of honour" (*Cyropaedia* 8.3.9). Besides its functional aspect, since order as it was planned must not be upset, one of the conditions for the success of the ploy is found in the separation from the crowd: as Xenophon writes in different circumstances, "distance gives safety and increases the illusion" (*Cavalry Commander* 5.5).

B. Court and Pomp

The Median ceremonial is intimately linked to Cyrus' settling in a palace: however, his settling in a new place does not mean that he withdraws from the political scene and shuts himself off from society just as Sardanapalus did according to Ctesias.⁴¹ Xenophon indeed strives to blur the distinction between the public and the private spheres as the Greeks conceived them,⁴² in order to establish a dialectic according to which there is a clear separation between the court and the entire empire subjected to the sovereign's overwhelming yet benevolent domination. A small-scale 'face to face society', the court is indeed organized like a space in which traditional distinctions are blurred: its organisation is similar to that of a limited public space in which wealth and glory are not only for the sovereign but also for a closely-knit oligarchic community. Therefore, at Cyrus' court, there is something of a confusion between private and public spheres.⁴³

After Babylon is taken, the sharp contrast established between the royal *oikos* and the entire empire is essential if one is to understand the organisation of the Median ceremonial. As Chrysantas, one of Cyrus' most loyal lieutenants, explains: "Well, Cyrus, it was hitherto quite proper for you to make yourself approachable (*eikotôs en tôi phanerôi sauton pareikhes*), for the reasons you have yourself assigned and also because we were not the ones whose favour you most needed to win; for we were with you for our own sakes. But it was imperative for you in every way to win the affections of the multitude (*to de plêthos edei anaktasthai ek pantos tropou*), so that they might consent to toil and risk their lives with us as gladly as possible" (*Cyropaedia* 7.5.55). For the first time, a clear-cut separation between Cyrus' entourage and the army is drawn. Trying to be close to the men or standing aloof are both considered as ploys, as means to trick men into being more obedient. Therefore, creating or reducing distance is not a moral issue. In both cases, it has to do with a government *technê* which is applied to different situations: it is applied either to an army on campaign or to an empire organized around a new center, Babylon. One thus comes to realize that the Median ceremonial has a truly political purpose aimed at the outside world.

Besides, this change can be seen in the vocabulary used: at the end of Book 7, the word *homotimoi* (Peers), which before was applied to the Persian nobility, comes to disappear and it is used only twice afterwards.⁴⁴ Far from being exceptions which would undermine our hypothesis, these two instances even confirm what has been said so far.

The first mention of the *homotimoi*, in 7.5.85, stages the evolution which is taking place: "I have nothing new to tell you, my men; but just as in Persia the peers (*hoi homotimoi*) spend their

time at the government buildings (*epi tois arkheiois*), so here also we peers (*tous homotimous*) must practise the same things as we did there". As is often the case, Cyrus' assertion is far from being sincere and it paves the way for profound changes. As D. L. Gera pointed out, Cyrus shows the settling in of the new court as a mere shifting of the former Persian customs into conquered Babylon, when in fact, the very idea is to be no longer at the disposal of the *polis*, near public buildings as in Persia. The hidden agenda is to shift the life of the court once and for all with the new king to his palace (Gera 1993: 289). The crucial factor is no longer one's social background and the flawless compliance with the *cursus honorum* (1.2.15) which defined the idea of belonging to the former Persian ruling class known as the *homotimoi*: to fight one's way into Cyrus' entourage is the only thing that matters. Just before relinquishing the obsolete trappings of the Persian *politeia*, Cyrus conjures them up as though better to enforce his radical reforms.

The last instance of the word *homotimoi* allows us to have a deeper insight into Xenophon's intentions. It is found when Cyrus, after consolidating his power in Babylon, travels to the land of his Fathers, Persia, bringing presents for his family, his friends and "all the *homotimoi*" (*Cyropaedia* 8.5.21). His father Cambyzes, the constitutional monarch, still rules the Persian kingdom and social organisation, still based on age, remains unaffected by the reforms which are conceivable only in Babylon. The Persian people under Cambyzes' rule always wear plain clothes. A treaty of friendship between Persian authorities and Cyrus is even signed: the very mentioning of such a treaty clearly shows that, in Xenophon's mind, we are here dealing with two truly distinct powers. Indeed, the idea is to maintain order, to guarantee the security of the new empire and also to keep Persian *politeia* in its traditional forms (*Cyropaedia* 8.5.24).

The changes brought about in the nomenclature correspond to a new world and more precisely to a reorganization of the aristocracy at Cyrus' court. From then on, the king's entourage is called *koinônoi*.⁴⁵ This expression must be understood in terms of radical novelty: the "associates" around the king are no longer only Persian *homotimoi* – forming an ethnically and socially homogeneous group. Indeed, during the campaign which led to victory, successive rallyings have taken place: the lower classes of Persian society, Medians but also Armenians like Tigranes or Assyrians like Gadatas and Gobryas (*contra* Carlier 1978: 151) were integrated into and associated with Persian power.

This evolution is confirmed for good when Xenophon depicts the great procession as it was conceived by Cyrus: "he called to him those *of the Persians and of the allies* who held office, and distributed Median robes among them – and this was the first time that the Persians put on the Median robe (*prôton Persai Mêdikên stolên enedusan*)" (8.3.1). Those *koinonoi* are thus now defined by the role they play and no longer by their ethnic background.⁴⁶

We now understand more clearly the following assertion (1.3.2): "the Persians at home even to this day have much plainer clothing and a more frugal way of life". One might sometimes have thought of an interpolation.⁴⁷ In order to make his point, in the imaginary *politeia* sketched at the beginning of the book, Xenophon keeps on using as best he can (and up to the epilogue) the fictitious distinction between the Persians who wear the Median dress at the king's court and the majority of Persian people who keep on wearing severe clothing.

C. *The oikos and the court*

The ceremonial comes to take its full meaning only once the distinction between the royal *koinonoi* and the other subjects is firmly established: the latter are a crowd which must be mastered even if it implies using ploys. This distinction, which is an interpretative key, is sometimes blurred by the ambiguity of certain words. According to the context, the subjects, (*hoi arkhomenoi*), become "the subjects in general", the crowd; however, the word also sometimes means the members of the king's entourage (as in 8.1.21 or 8.1.37: *tois arkhomenois*). The courtiers and the crowd are the king's subjects in both cases. However, it does not prevent Cyrus from treating both groups in two extremely different ways.

Cyrus' main preoccupation is to leave some free time for those in his entourage so that "his associates (*koinônas*) in power should be such as they ought to be" (*Cyropaedia* 8.1.16). It is the time when "they passed a resolution that the nobles (*entimous*) should always be in attendance at court" (8.1.6) inasmuch as, for Cyrus, taking care of his companions consists above all in setting the example to them.⁴⁸ The court is like a 'face to face society' which is based on feelings of friendship or of love for the sovereign. The idea of continuously living together is essential for the form of government which was set up in Babylon: "In the first place, if any of those who were able to live by the labours of others failed to attend at court (*epi tas thuras*), he made inquiry after them; for he thought that those who came (*tous parontas*) would not be willing to do anything dishonourable or immoral, partly because they were in the presence of their sovereign and partly also because they knew that, whatever they did, they would be under the eyes of the best men there (*tôn beltistôn*)" (*Cyropaedia* 8.1.16). On the contrary, keeping out of sight of the crowd, the sovereign and his court observe principles of complete transparency and intimacy as far as their relationships are concerned.

It is within this context that Cyrus "chose to wear the Median dress himself and persuaded his associates (*tous koinônas*) also to adopt it" (*Cyropaedia* 8.1.40): just like Ischomachus with his wife, Cyrus shares everything with his companions. Consequently, the Median dress is meant to deceive only those who do not live at the court. Contrary to what Herodotus conceived Median ceremonials to be, i.e. an opportunity for the sovereign to set himself apart from his entourage, the ceremonial enables Cyrus to reinforce the ties of the courtiers gathered around him in the palace, and to create a clear distinction between the court and the crowd. This is why one needs to qualify the parallels which have been drawn between the Median ceremonial as it is mentioned in the *Cyropaedia* and the introduction of Oriental ceremonials by the first Median sovereign, Deiokes, in the *Histories* (1.99: *esemnune*). In Herodotus' work, the king thus wishes to make himself unapproachable for his former equals;⁴⁹ he needs to prevent people who previously had a similar status from experiencing jealousy, *phthonos*. Conversely, in the *Cyropaedia*, adopting the Median ceremonial is only the final step in a series of measures meant to separate the court as a whole from the entire empire.⁵⁰ In Xenophon's book, the Median dress is meant to help consolidate the bases of the community within the court, and to maintain deceptive relationships with the outside world.⁵¹

The comparison with the *Oeconomicus* then takes on its full meaning. Indeed, when Ischomachus chides his wife for using make-up, he imposes his own point of view by using the vocabulary of the community. His first argument consists in asserting that husband and wife cannot afford to fool each other since they are "partner in the goods (*khrêmatôn koinônon*)" and "partner in the body (*tôn sômatôn koinônêsontes*)"; Ischomachus carries on: "How then should I seem more

worthy of your love in this partnership of the body (*koinônos*) – by striving to have my body hale and strong when I present it to you, and so literally to be of a good countenance in your sight, or by smearing my cheeks with red lead and painting myself under the eyes with rouge before I show myself to you and clasp you in my arms, cheating you and offering to your eyes and hands red lead instead of my real flesh (*khôrôtos*)?" (*Oeconomicus* 10.4-5). Within the context of the *oikos*, to cheat one's associate by using make-up is out of the question.

Ultimately, the new court established by Cyrus in the *Cyropaedia* is a partnership in the goods and in the body; ceremonials are used only in relations with the outside world. As matters stand, this type of community is no less asymmetrical than the community conceived by Ischomachus. Just like the husband in the *Oeconomicus*, Cyrus is in a position of strength and he ensures *in fine* that the system works properly. To the uneven relationship between the sexes in the *Oeconomicus* corresponds the uneven sharing of power in the *Cyropaedia*. In both cases, marital power and royal power are shared – with the wife or with the courtiers – only inasmuch as those who have authority are willing to share a part of it.

The system described by Xenophon's text must be interpreted in the light of Herodotus' *Histories*, on which he weaves his own text: "But the Persians more than all men welcome foreign customs. They wear the Median dress, thinking it more beautiful than their own, and the Egyptian cuirass in war. Their luxurious practices are of all kinds, and all borrowed" (*Histories* 1.135). The adoption of such customs is therefore made by all the Persians, unlike in Xenophon's account, from which all ethnic references are absent. On the one hand, in Herodotus' work, the adoption of the Median *stolê* is only one of the elements which hint at the Persians' capacity for acculturation; on the other hand, in Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*, the adoption of a foreign ceremonial implies a necessary distance between the political leaders and those who are governed, irrespective of ethnical background (Mueller-Goldingen 1995: 90). The emphasis laid on the entourage of the leader – which is a constant preoccupation in Xenophon's work⁵² – is what distinguishes Cyrus' conception from Deïokes': far from putting a damper on his companions' proud behaviour, Cyrus helps to "fabricate" it in order to set his "associates" definitively apart from the other subjects.

If one takes into consideration this distinction between Cyrus' court and the empire, new light is then shed on some passages from the beginning of the book. The *Cyropaedia* comes to regain internal coherence, and the passage in which the future sovereign stays in Media takes on a clear meaning (1.3-4). The adoption of the Median ceremonial has often seemed odd: indeed, when Cyrus came back from Persia after a long stay in Media, he had precisely decided to give up wearing the beautiful Median dress that his grandfather Astyages had given him when he had arrived at a young age in this land of tyranny.⁵³ In fact, this passage must be interpreted in the light of the context described by Xenophon: when Cyrus came back from Media, the land of *truphê* (*Cyropaedia* 1.5.1), it was necessary for him to relinquish the splendour symbolized by the Median costume as a way to put up with the customs of his fellow-countrymen who welcomed him back to his native country. However, by describing the reaction of Cyrus as a child, marvelling at his grandfather's Median dress, Xenophon had implicitly underlined the idea of the political influence of pomp on gullible subjects:

Then he noticed that his grandfather was adorned with pencillings beneath his eyes, with rouge rubbed on his face, and with a wig of false hair – the common Median fashion. For all

this is Median, and so are their purple tunics (*porphuroi khitônes*), and their mantles (*kandus*), the necklaces about their necks, and the bracelets (*streptoi*) on their wrists, while the Persians at home even to this day (*kai nun eti*) have much plainer clothing and a more frugal way of life. So, observing his grandfather's adornment (*kosmon*) and staring at him, he said: 'Oh mother, how handsome my grandfather is!' (*Cyropaedia* 1.3.2).

This passage calls for two remarks. First of all, one may invalidate the "interpolation" hypothesis which has been put forward on occasions, mainly for reasons of internal coherence in relation with the rest of the text and more precisely with the adoption of the Median ceremonial (see above, n. 46). However, one must emphasize the fact that far from being a momentary feeling of wonder, the small boy's bewilderment in front of his sumptuously dressed grandfather, is a paradigmatic situation: can not one consider that, by carefully staging his public appearances, Cyrus tries to place his subjects in the situation he found himself in when he was a young bewildered child? The Median ceremonial could then be considered to be part of a broader strategy of infantilization.⁵⁴ Indeed, was Cyrus not called the Father of his subjects (*Cyropaedia* 8.2.9)?

The Median ceremonial would therefore provide Cyrus with the opportunity to establish a strategy in order to invert the admiring attitude that he had as a child. As often in the book, Cyrus goes from playing the role of the son (or the role of the perfect grandson) to that of the symbolical father. However, the king imposes this father figure only by cleverly reaching a happy medium between the observance of Persian traditions and the adoption of Median customs.⁵⁵

III. MEDIAN SOFTNESS versus PERSIAN FIRMNESS

A. *Ponos, or the splendour of sweat*

After describing the adoption of the Median ceremonial, Xenophon adds that it is not the only means Cyrus uses to separate his companions from the crowd of his subjects. Indeed, he claims that: "Those, therefore, who [Cyrus] thought ought to be in authority he thus prepared in his own school by careful training (*meletêi*) as well as by the respect (*semnôs*) which he commanded as their leader" (*Cyropaedia* 8.1.43). Therefore, there are two ways the king can train his entourage: he can use respect, i.e. all the tricks Cyrus employs to make himself magnificent, stately and imposing – and more precisely the adoption of the Median ceremonial; but he can also train them to be virtuous by teaching them the meaning of *ponos*, i.e. working on oneself and on one's body.⁵⁶

From then on, Cyrus considers that a luxurious way of dressing and physical exercise are intimately linked whereas, at the beginning of the *Cyropaedia*, there is a clear-cut distinction between both aspects. Indeed, at the very beginning of the war (2.4.1-6), the young conqueror refuses to wear the Median dress that Cyaxares, his uncle, asks him to don, on the occasion of the visit paid by an Indian delegation. Instead of appearing "as brilliant and splendid as possible (*hôs lamprotata kai eukosmotata*)" (*Cyropaedia* 2.4.1), Cyrus chooses to act differently and, being accompanied by men in arms, he ran up to the ambassadors still wearing "his Persian dress, which was not at all showy (*en têi Persikêi stolêi ouden ti hubrismenêi*)" (2.4.5). As he faces Cyaxares' anger, Cyrus justifies his behaviour:

Should I be showing you more respect, Cyaxares, if I arrayed myself in purple and adorned myself with bracelets and put on a necklace and at my leisure (*saleuôn*) obeyed your orders, than I have in obeying you with such dispatch and accompanied by so large and so efficient an army? And I have come myself *adorned with sweat and marks of haste* (*hidrôti kai spoudêi kai autos kekosmêmenos*) to honour you and I present the others likewise obedient to you (*Cyropaedia* 2.4.6).

It is striking that the verb "to adorn" and the idea of adornment should here apply to sweat and not to richly coloured and brocaded finery as in the ceremonial; staging the *ponos* can therefore be seen as a strategy of political shows meant to impress the spectators, just as a sumptuous ceremonial would do. Such a choice needs to be replaced within its context: the Indian delegation is not in the same situation as the submissive subjects of Babylon: indeed, they are foreign ambassadors who are trying to decide which side to be on in the forthcoming war; within that context, a display of strength is more useful and effective than a sumptuous ceremony. Unlike Cyaxares, who, in any event throughout the *Cyropaedia*, prefers an elaborate way of dressing to the splendour of sweat,⁵⁷ Cyrus is waiting for the war to be over in order to use Median dress as a political weapon.⁵⁸

However, once Babylon is taken, the adoption of the ceremonial does not mean that Cyrus absolutely refuses the "splendour of sweat". But, as circumstances dictate, one chooses sweat or sumptuous clothing. The same person must be able to live in luxury and at the same time to meet the requirements of *ponos*; indeed, just before the ceremonial is adopted and before the sumptuous Median dress is donned, Xenophon points to Cyrus' preoccupation with his entourage's ability to control their bodies and desires: "By this same exercise [i.e. hunting], too, he was best able to accustom his associates (*tous koinônas*) to temperance and the endurance of hardship, to heat and cold, to hunger and thirst" (*Cyropaedia* 8.1.36).⁵⁹ The men who are going to wear the Median costume are precisely those who have to undergo these hardships. The same goes for the king (8.1.38).⁶⁰

Xenophon therefore establishes a close link between Cyrus' sumptuous appearance and the strict corporal discipline he imposes upon himself. This original idea echoes a passage from the *Oeconomicus* in which Lysander the Spartan is surprised to see that his host Cyrus the Younger harmoniously combines the culture of *ponos* with the display of *truphê*: "What, Cyrus?" exclaimed Lysander, looking at him, and marking the beauty and perfume of his robes, and the splendour of the necklaces and bangles and other jewels that he was wearing; did you really plant part of this with your own hands?". Lysander answers him thus: "I swear by the Sun-god that I never yet sat down to dinner when in sound health, without first working hard at some task of war or agriculture, or exerting myself somehow" (*Oeconomicus* 4.23-24).⁶¹ In this passage as in the *Cyropaedia*, luxury is not necessarily perceived as a sign of degeneration: on the contrary, luxury can embody the "splendour of royal power" (Briant 1996: 313), at least when it is combined with corporal exercise. The problematic richness of the Greek notion of *truphê* is here fully revealed *dans toute sa splendeur*.⁶²

Ceremonials are not themselves signs of the dangerous and corrupting power of pomp.

Furthermore, when Cyrus chooses to take up Median pomp, he also decides to introduce a few customs *into the ceremonial itself*, thus showing the importance he attaches to the *ponos*: the *ponos* is introduced into the heart of the *truphê*. Cyrus thus asks his *koinonoi* to be clad in Median dress but he also henceforth urges them "not to spit or to wipe the nose in public (*hôs mê ptuontes mêde apomuttomenoi phaneroi eien*)" (*Cyropaedia* 8.1.42): in other words, he asks them to observe strict principles of personal hygiene. Cyrus wants to stage a cleverly designed show in which his companions would convincingly appear as disciplined men who revel in physical effort in a truly virile way. Indeed, such a behaviour implies regular physical exercise since Xenophon writes at the beginning of the *Cyropaedia* (about the Persians and not about the king's court) that:

There remains even unto this day evidence (*marturia*) of their moderate fare (*tês metrias diaitês*) and of their working off by exercise what they eat: for even to the present time it is a breach of decorum for a Persian to spit or to blow his nose (*to apoptuein kai to apomuttesthai*) or to appear afflicted with flatulence; it is a breach of decorum also to be seen going apart either to make water or for anything else of that kind. And this would not be possible for them, if they did not lead *an abstemious life* (*diaitêi metriai*) and throw off the moisture *by hard work* (*ekponountes*), so that it passes off in some other way (1.2.16: italics mine).⁶³

Besides, in this passage, we see that the ceremonial adopted by Cyrus in Babylon not only corresponds to the introduction of Median customs but also to the adoption of typically Persian practices designed for a court which has many different ethnic backgrounds: acculturation is reciprocal and is not achieved only in one way as in Herodotus' book. Instead of the Median ceremonial, one must talk about the Medo-Persian ceremonial. While displaying their *truphê* in dress, the *koinonoi* display their perfect physical discipline which shows their *diaitê metria*, their balanced diet.

As a matter of fact, in the epilogue, Xenophon criticizes shallow ceremonials in which physical appearance and the dress code – which denote *truphê* – do not encompass the concomitant practices of *engkrateia* and of *ponos*.⁶⁴ The ceremonial made sense only inasmuch as it implied "physical effort"⁶⁵ by way of consequence. The ceremonial is then no more than an empty frame: "For example, it used to be their custom neither to spit nor to blow the nose. It is obvious that they observed this custom not for the sake of saving the moisture in the body, but from the wish to harden the body by labour and perspiration (*dia ponôn kai hidrôtos ta sômata stereousthai*). But now the custom of refraining from spitting or blowing the nose still continues, but they never give themselves the trouble to work off the moisture in some other direction" (*Cyropaedia* 8.8.9).

B. The virtue of *truphê*

Within this context, the epilogue takes on a different meaning;⁶⁶ Xenophon does indeed end up criticizing the court dress code, but it should not be interpreted as an outright rejection of luxurious dress. To dress with a certain *truphê* was allowed, as long as the person's behaviour went beyond the mere quest for comfort and luxury. However, whereas wearing beautiful clothes was not an end in itself and played a public role in Cyrus' time, from then on it would correspond to the relentless

search for comforts. Consequently, the only purpose for wearing clothes is to satisfy private ends. In the ideological reconstruction laid out by Xenophon, the main problem the Achaemenid empire faces is the giving up of Persian customs to the benefit of Median practices: "Furthermore, they are much more effeminate now than they were in Cyrus' day. For at that time they still adhered to the old discipline and the old abstinence that they received from the Persians, but adopted the Median garb and Median luxury; now, on the contrary, they are allowing the rigour of the Persians to die out (*têi ek Persôn paideiai kai egkrateiai ekhrônto*), while they keep up the effeminacy of the Medes (*têi de Mêdôn stolêi kai habrotêti*)" (*Cyropaedia* 8.8.15). In order to avoid going into decline, it is necessary to maintain a balance between luxurious clothing – along with its corresponding values – and a well-ordered life. For Xenophon, the very legitimacy of the ceremonial depends on this requirement to combine luxury and effort, instead of having one or the other in an alternate fashion; if this rule is not respected, the entire system is doomed to failure in the *truphê*.

Therefore, the king must have the appearance of the *truphê* but, at the same time, his behaviour must be worthy of *aretê*. The Median ceremonial *in fine* consists in a meditation upon the reality and appearance of the *truphê*, upon the tension a king must establish between being and appearing. Cyrus makes a distinction between the courtiers and the whole empire. Those who live outside the court may and must let themselves be won over by the lure of appearances; we then see that the sovereign's and his companions' outward *truphê* originates from a carefully thought-out strategy based on the great fascination luxury holds for people (see also Briant 1996: 311-313). However, at the palace and within the king's entourage, moral virtue and self-control are encouraged.

In such circumstances, the dilemma Heracles faces in the *Memorabilia* (2.1.17-22) takes on its full meaning: the hero must choose between *Kakia* and *Aretê*, between a life devoted to pleasure and a life dedicated to working and being virtuous.⁶⁷ *Kakia* is embodied by a beautiful woman whose height is increased by beautiful shoes and whose beauty is enhanced by make-up and a sumptuous garb (in a striking analogy with the description of the ceremonial in Babylon). She promises the pretender to the throne a life of pleasure, but she fails to seduce Herakles who is in full control of himself. The hero refuses to yield to her offers because he assuredly displays "moral and spiritual force", but also because he does not want to set aside political and military action as *Kakia* urges him to do ("of wars and worries you shall not think": 2.1.24). Under no circumstances shall a man who wants to become king let himself be seduced by *Kakia* – and by the bodily pleasures.⁶⁸ However, nothing prevents him from using *Kakia*'s appearance in order to hold sway over his subjects while, at the same time, leading a life worthy of *aretê*.

C. Cyrus the Median or Cyrus the Persian?

Cyrus always tries to combine the teachings of Persia and Media, the two places where he was brought up (and also his two genetic inheritances).⁶⁹ The Persian legacy does appeal to him inasmuch as he actually tries to show himself superior to his subjects; but he knows that it is no longer enough: conjuring and showing are necessary to control the newly conquered nations. Cyrus sets up a political balance between the Median and the Persian legacies. In this respect, it seems to us irrelevant to consider, as some have done,⁷⁰ that the end of the book and the settling in Babylon lead to a complete reversal of situation and to the unequivocal adoption of Median customs, whether

in terms of clothing, food, or in terms of legal and political systems.

The Medo-Persian balance can be seen in the dress code, as we have previously pointed out. It can also be seen in food – one of the important factors of the *truphê* (see Schmitt-Pantel 1992: 430-433) – since, in return for the delicious meals at the king's table, the king demands of his companions (including himself) that they should do some physical exercise. Indeed, thanks to the practice of hunting, "he was best able to accustom his associates to temperance and the endurance of hardship, to heat and cold, to hunger and thirst" (8.1.36). Furthermore, "[Cyrus himself] never dined without first having got himself into a sweat" (8.1.38).⁷¹ Similarly, his concern for a Medo-Persian balance is obvious in the legal and political way of handling things. Indeed, Cyrus does not try to exercise his power without restraint, as Astyages does in Media (1.3.18). It is true that what was said of Cyrus' father ("his standard is not his will but the law"⁷²) no longer holds good for the son, but, on the other hand, it does not mean that the young conqueror goes as far as replacing the law by his own goodwill. After taking Babylon, Cyrus comes to think that the good ruler is "as a law with eyes (*bleponta nomon*) for men" (*Cyropaedia* 8.1.22: see Tuplin 1996: 91). However such a conception does not mean that the king becomes law incarnate (*nomos empsuchos*). Xenophon simply shows Cyrus as *being the enforcer of the written laws* which would be ineffective without external support. Far from substantiating a self-normative and proto-hellenistic conception of monarchy, Xenophon only summons up an aristocratic commonplace which he had already used in the *Oeconomicus*.⁷³ Once again, it has to do with a skilfully-maintained balance between strictly obeying Persian written laws and yielding to royal whims in Media. As to Cyrus' allegedly excessive behaviour (*pleonexia*) after Babylon is taken, as is underlined by Xenophon, it is witnessed only in the fears of the conqueror's father.⁷⁴ The latter indeed reminds his son how difficult it is to maintain the balance he tried to establish when he acceded to the throne; in the event, this successful but unstable balance is lost at Cyrus' death. Finally, the distance set up by Cyrus bears no relation to the stilted Median ceremonial. In this respect, it does not seem possible to compare Cyrus' separation from the crowd during the procession (8.3.19-23) with Astyages' situation in Media (1.3.8). Indeed, in Astyages' case, the Median king is unapproachable both for the subjects and for the courtiers indiscriminately;⁷⁵ in Cyrus' case, however, as we have pointed out earlier on, the sovereign is and must be accessible to the courtiers.

An Athenian in quest of distinction like Xenophon could use two aristocratic strategies to confront the usual democratic ethos. The first and most customary approach was to adopt an austere way of being and appearing which lead to laconism: In the *Cyropaedia*, the Persian *politeia* described in the beginning of the work expresses that range of values. Conversely, one could also choose to distinguish oneself by displaying a powerful and impressive richness which was associated with Eastern luxury and medism.⁷⁶

In the *Cyropaedia*, Xenophon imagines an happy medium between these two ideological solutions: Cyrus is an accomplished "equilibrist", an outstanding man whose *moderation* enabled him "to reduce to obedience a vast number of men and cities and nations" (*Cyropaedia* 1.1.3). In spite of what has often been said, the *Cyropaedia* does deserve its title:⁷⁷ up to the very end of the book, excluding the epilogue, Xenophon shows how a dual *paideia*, being both Persian and Median, can be the key to the creation of an ideal government.

Notes

1. This is Hippolyte Taine's expression in *Essais de critique et d'histoire* I (1904), 49-95, about the Greek army in the *Anabasis*. It can be used within the frame of the *Cyropaedia* – at any rate before Cyrus accedes to the throne at the end of the book.
2. 7.5.57: "After that, Cyrus moved into the royal palace (...). And after he took possession, Cyrus sacrificed first to Hestia (*Hestiai*), then to sovereign Zeus, and then to any other god that the magi suggested" (all quotations are based on Loeb editions). If there is another sort of nomadism going on (*Cyr.* 8.6.22), however, it takes on a different meaning than that of the wandering of the army before the conquest. On these issues, see Briant 1988: 253-273.
3. *Cyr.* 8.6.19-20. "The dividing-line between the military style of the past and the establishment of a new order of peace is marked by the capture of Babylon": Breebaart 1983: 120.
4. Delebecque 1978: 168: "les §§ 40-42 sont souvent jugés apocryphes parce que Xenophon exprime des idées contraires dans l'*Économique* 10.3-9".
5. It has been deemed possible to compare these episodes with the New Year festivities taking place during the spring equinox in Persepolis: standing in front of the crowd, the Great King proved his kinship with the deity by performing rituals which were supposed to awaken nature and to favour universal fertility. See Eddy 1961: 51-58. Indeed, in 8.3.34, Xenophon points out that this royal procession is still taking place in his time. Besides Xenophon was able to base his description of the Nowruz ceremonial on his own experience and on his vision of the army led by Artaxerxes II during the *Anabasis*: see Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1980: 195 and Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1991: 196. Therefore Xenophon may well have described a genuine Persian procession, borrowing aspects from the Persepolitan Nowruz and from military marches.
6. Strauss 1939: 521, about the *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians*. In another text (Strauss 1968), applying his method of "reading between the lines", he writes about the *Cyropaedia* that: "Cyrus' political activity and his amazing successes consisted in shaping a stable and moderate aristocracy into an unstable 'oriental despotism' which collapsed right after his death at latest". For a similar perspective on the matter, see Higgins 1977: 12, Glenn 1990 and, above all, Too 1998: 288, who goes as far as saying that "the discrepancies in the *Cyropaedia* are sufficiently explicit to demand that we read the lines themselves".
7. See Cartledge 1993: 7: "is Xenophon best seen as a subtly ironical and allusively lucid writer (the 'revisionist' view of the 70's and 80's) or rather as an earnestly sententious and ploddingly moralistic exponent of human affairs (the traditional and still the majority view) ?" There may be a happy medium between these two extreme positions: one could conceive Xenophon as being neither ironical nor over- sententious.
8. Carlier's article (1978) is thoroughly discussed by Breebaart 1983: 117-134, and more

- precisely 133-134. Due 1989: 216-219, also criticizes Carlier's point of view.
9. See Wood 1964: 65, Breitenbach 1966: 1739 and Anderson 1974: 178-179 for the fake parallel between the *Oec.*10.3-9 and *Cyr.* 8.1.40-42.
 10. *Mem.* 4.5.10: "*to heautou sôma kalôs dioikêseie*".
 11. See, in a similar perspective Foucault 1984: 27-35 and Hindley 1994.
 12. See Grottannelli 1989: 187, on the importance of Cyrus' stay in Media in Xenophon's *paideia*. On the influence of the maternal uncle or grandfather as far as the *paideia* is concerned, see Bremmer 1983.
 13. *Epideiknunai; phainointo; phaneroi; phainesthai; dokein* : *Cyr.* 8.1.41-42.
 14. Strabo says that Persian leaders wear *hupodêma koilon diploun* (15.3.19): see Hirsch 1985: 89. Whether this detail is true or false does not really matter here: what I am interested in is the truly Greek interplay between appearance and reality.
 15. For a different perspective, see Briant 1996: 238-239.
 16. For a slightly different point of view, see Too 1998: 295.
 17. In this extract, the use of magical metaphor may be linked to a hint of Colchian magic. But of course, witchcraft and rhetoric go together quite often: *Gorg.Hel.* 10, *Pl.Sph.*234E-F, *Plt.*303C, *Euthyd.*289E-F, *Mnx.*234C. Socrates bewitched his interlocutors (*R.*358B) (I owe this remarks and references to C. Tuplin). Conversely, in the *Cyropaedia*, the magic is a visual one and not a rhetorical one.
 18. We should here see that this negative judgement is for Xenophon due to a mere idea of effectiveness (*contra* Too 1998: 295). Indeed, such magical practices would only lead to the soldiery getting her revenge in the end.
 19. See for example Tuplin 1990: 23-24.
 20. He must "appear in public [only] on rare and solemn occasions (*spanios te kai semnos*)": *Cyr.*7.5.37. This idea will be around for a long time afterwards, and first of all thanks to the pseudo-Aristotle's *De Mundo*. The invisible power is indeed the dream of an absolute power. As M. Senellart writes (after Kantorowicz), the withdrawal of the prince corresponds to society applying the demand of visibility to itself (Senellart 1995: 280). In the *Cyropaedia*, the separation between the king and his subjects leads to a control of society by "the King's eyes and ears" which are multiplied (8.2.10-12); after taking Babylon, while at the same time setting himself apart from the people, Cyrus becomes "as a law with eyes (*bleponta nomon*) for men" (8.1.22). Invisibility can therefore be equated with panoptism.
 21. On this opposition between Cyrus and Agesilaus, see Tuplin 1994: 141. On the issue of the *princeps clausus*, see the remarks made by Briant 1996: 270-272.
 22. See Loraux 1981: 323-324. For the word *semnos*, see Chantraine 1968, s.v. *sebomai*:

- according to the etymology "to withdraw" (*tyegw-), hence (1) to be in a state of religious fear or (2) to respect, but in *semnos* and its derivatives, there is an erosion of the ancient meaning of the term, leading to a more negative sense (*viz.* arrogance). On the ambiguities of *semnos* and its derivatives, see De Vries 1944, Loraux 1981: 323-331 and (within the context of the tragedy) Alaux 1995: 177-180.
23. The threat of *phthonos* hovers over social relationships between the people and the elite, but also within the elite: to avert such a crisis is one of Xenophon's main goals. See for instance, *Cyr.* 7.5.77; 8.2.19; *Anab.* 5.7.10; *Ages.* 1.4; *Hiero* 11.15; *Mem.* 2.3.1-2; *Symp.* 3.9. On *phthonos* and its role within the Athenian democracy, see Gouldner 1965: 57-58, Ober 1989: 74-76, 205-206.
 24. Since comedy plays a demystifying role, *semnôtês* is not shown in a favourable light: see for instance Taillardat 1962: 173-177. As a matter of fact, as Loraux 1980: 324 notes: "*Semnos* is an adjective which is at first sight laudatory, but in reality, the word is loaded with derogatory connotations, and any *semnôtês* seems to be ambiguous, even in the case of a god (Zeus, in the *Birds*) or of a priest" (my translation). Indeed, Plato often uses the word in an ironic fashion, but De Vries 1944: 155 n. 271, points out that the balance between positive and negative meaning is upset and inverted in the apocryphal works: the pseudo-Plato takes himself more seriously than the real one and, full of *semnôtês*, uses *semnos* as an honorific term. One can tell if the adjective has a positive or a negative meaning only according to a careful analysis of the context.
 25. *Ar. Nub.* 362-363: "*kaph'hêmin semnoprosôpeis*". Socrates is grave and important like the Clouds which are also *semnai* (265, 291, 314, 364); Callias fr. 12K (= *Pedetai*): "*Ti dê su semnoi kai phroneis houtô mega*," See Loraux 1981: 325 and Green 1997: 133: rolling his eyes, swelling with conceit, Socrates acts as an example Cyrus must not follow, since he is at odds with the ideal of *nihil admirari* as it is displayed in the Median ceremonial.
 26. Mueller-Goldingen 1995: 217 n. 4 clearly shows that the parallel between Agesilaus and Cyrus cannot be drawn. "Doch in Wirklichkeit ist die Parallele nur scheinbar. Kyros macht es nicht zum Prinzip, selten erreichbar zu sein, und rühmt sich dessen nicht". See also Hirsch 1985: 44: "Some of Xenophon's remarks are manifestly tendentious, as when he seizes upon the remoteness of the king (...) as sign of shameful conduct and faithless dealing. Even without detailed knowledge of the Persian court, common sense should have told him that the differences in scale between Sparta and the Persian Empire made the situation of the two monarchs vastly different".
 27. For *The Cavalry Commander*, the idea is to trick the *Boulê* while giving the impression of making the horses gallop at a great speed (3.9).
 28. *Hipparch.* 3.10: the group of cavalrymen must ride abreast into the hippodrome and "drive out the people standing there (*exelaseian tous ek tou mesou anthrôpous*)". The cavalry commander and his cavalrymen seek to set themselves apart from the crowd, just like Cyrus and his companions.
 29. On the relationship between private and public luxury, see Whitehead 1983: 56-57, Ober 1989: 224-226, Kurke 1992: 106-107. See also for dress style as political statement in

- Athens, Ober 1989: 206-207. As to the *Cyropaedia*, see Due 1989: 219: "the principle that pomp and splendour are important and efficient instruments in ruling is accepted both in Athens and in Persia. The disagreement consists in defining how and by whom".
30. The military ideal of accessibility is also mentioned by Xenophon's Teleutias (*Hell.* 5.1.14) and by Xenophon himself (*Anab.* 4.3.10). For a broader point of view see Pritchett 1974: 243-245.
 31. The same type of distinction can be found in Isocrates (15.131) when he points out that the arrogance (*megalophrosunê*) shown by Timotheus, the famous Athenian general from the fourth century, was an advantage within a military context but that it nevertheless caused him a lot of trouble in his relationships with the *dêmos*. See Ober 1989: 92.
 32. See Holden 1890: *ad loc.* See also Wood 1964: 65, Breitenbach 1966: 1739, Anderson 1974: 178-179 and Too 1998: 296. On the ambiguous use of make-up in ancient Greece, see Goldhill 1995: 82-83, 90-91 and 1998: 114.
 33. Once again, Xenophon goes against commonsense in this passage: Indeed, in Athens, wives had the right to make themselves up for their husbands, within the *oikos*. On the contrary, when going out, they were to show great restraint, especially in terms of clothing. See Frontisi & Vernant 1997: 88.
 34. A moralistic vision is here inadequate to grasp the subtlety of Xenophon's thought in this matter. In the *Memorabilia* (4.2.17), the Athenian does not shy away from the idea of deceiving friends for their own good or for the safety of the whole community. Indeed, Socrates says to Euthydemus: "Now suppose that a general, seeing that his army is downhearted, tells a lie and says that reinforcements are approaching, and by means of this lie checks discouragement among the men, under which heading shall we put this deception? " "Under justice, I think." Xenophon is not alone to maintain that point of view: there is also a "noble lie" in Plato for whom every government must resort to useful lies. See for example, *Laws*, 663d-e and Bertrand 1999: 386-396.
 35. As Anderson 1974: 179 cunningly points out: "A ruler, seen from a distance, is not of course subject to the intimate betrayals that disclose a wife's deceit to her husband. Xenophon does not add that no man is a hero to his own valet".
 36. On the expression "face to face society", see Finley 1985: 57.
 37. See also *Ages.* 5.6: "we all know this, that the greater a man's fame, the fiercer is the light that beats on all his actions".
 38. Within a military context, waiting is even likely to lead to a reversal of alliance: see for instance the case of Callicratidas who changed sides, as he was tired of always having to wait in front of Cyrus the Younger's tent (*Hell.* 1.6.6-7). See also Plutarch *Mor.* 222d.
 39. Another instance of ill-timed ceremonial is given by Xenophon in *Hell.* 3.4.7-8: in Ephesus, Agesilaus is infuriated to see Lysander with a crowd of clients "so that Agesilaus appeared to be a man in private station and Lysander king. Now Agesilaus showed afterwards that he

also was enraged (*emêne*) by these things; but the thirty Spartiatae with him were so jealous (*phthonou*) that they could not keep silence, but said to Agesilaus that Lysander was doing an unlawful thing in conducting himself more pompously than royalty (*hôs paranoma poioiê Lusandros tês basileias ogkêroteron diagôn*). Reversing roles and values by such a behaviour, Lysander exacerbates the *phthonos*, instead of channelling it.

40. See the remark made by Delebecque 1978: 108: "the verb *exelaunein* expresses the solemnity of an influential figure's public appearance, just as, on the other hand, the word "entrée" in French applies to the ceremonial during a reception held in a great figure's honour, in a city whether allied or defeated" (my translation).
41. See Athen. 528f-529a, where Sardanapalus is seen as a "king with his face covered with white lead and bejewelled like a woman, combining purple wool in the company of his concubines and sitting among them with knees uplifted, his eye-brows blackened, wearing a woman's dress".
42. Besides, according to Xenophon, "the management of private concerns differs only in point of number from that of public affairs" (*Mem.* 3.4.12) – and he (like Plato) is here in total disagreement, *toto caelo*, with Arist. *Pol.* 1252a7 sq.: "Those then who think that the natures of the statesman, the royal ruler, the head of an estate and the master of a family are the same, are mistaken – they imagine that the difference between these various forms of authority is one of greater and smaller numbers, not a difference in kind".
43. Regarding the same idea within an Achaemenid historical context, see Briant 1996: 478 sq.
44. Gera 1993: 289 n. 36, efficiently tackles the issue in a different perspective. See also Tuplin 1996: 92-94.
45. *Cyr.* 8.1.16, 25, 36, 40, etc. We also find another set expression, *tous peri auton* (8.1.15; 8.1.16; 8.1.37, etc.)
46. Such a reconstruction is cast by Xenophon in an ideological perspective. Indeed, Briant 1996: 94 underlines historical reality when he writes: "in a global analysis of the political staff under the first kings, one comes to realize the prominent positions held by the members of the Persian aristocracy in the government of the empire. The Persians are the ones who are the head of the empire and who hold positions of responsibility" (my translation). Paradoxically, Xenophon's emphasis on the diversity of backgrounds represented at the court would seem to provide a better description of the ethnic composition of elites in Alexander's time: Savalli-Lestrade 1998.
47. Lincke 1874: 13ff, as quoted by Mueller-Goldingen 1995: 50. The latter does underline the problem at stake; however he does not fully establish the distinction between the *koinonoi* and the Persians. For a study on the evolution towards a more severe dress code in Athens in the fourth century, see Geddes 1987: 307-33 and Miller 1997: part II, chapter 7 (incorporation of foreign items of dress).
48. *Cyr.* 8.1.6. Conversely, the use of the term *entimoi* shows Xenophon's refusal to use the word *homotimoi* which is reminiscent of Persia.

49. For instance, like Cyrus, Deioke forbids to his former companions to spit and laugh in front of him. But contrary to the Persian, the Median king does not take care here of the dignity of his former companions: His only concern is to improve his own *semnotês* in order to draw a sharp distinction between him and his ancient friends. See also Stroheker 1970: 279: "Xenophon umreisst also den bereits für Herodot vorhandenen Typus des *Princeps Clausus* an dem für ihn freilich positiven Beispiel des Kyros".
50. The Median ceremonial functions within the context of changes which concern not only the king but also his entourage. This is what is not mentioned by Charlesworth 1947: 34-38.
51. See Breebaart 1983: 123: "The subjects, not the equals, are to be bewitched".
52. Indeed, in *On Horsemanship* (11.10), the idea of the team is also linked to the issue of the ceremonial and of pomp: the cavalry commander "must attach much more importance to making *the whole troop* behind him worth looking at".
53. *Cyr.* 1.3.2-3 and 1.4.26. See Gera 1993: 291.
54. See Azoulay 2000: 21-26. For another instance of a linkage between "noble deception" and infantilization, see also *Memorabilia*, 4.1.17 where Socrates says to Euthydemus: "Suppose, again, that a man's son refuses to take a dose of medicine when he needs it, and the father induces him to take it by pretending that it is food, and cures him by means of this lie, where shall we put this deception?" "Under justice, I think..."
55. The context is that of royal evergetism and not that of the ceremonial. However, we may say that, besides natural gifts, a hieratic representation may help him to be considered as a slightly distant father figure. See also Due 1989: 17, for other comparisons of a political chief to a "father" in Greek literature.
56. On the importance of *ponos* in Xenophon's work, see Loraux 1982: 171-192 and more precisely Johnstone 1994: 219-240. Johnstone shows how the emphasis laid on *ponos* corresponds to an aristocratic strategy of distinction. Similarly, the ceremonial (and learning to be virtuous) corresponds to ways of setting oneself apart.
57. See Due 1989: 108. On the importance of sweat in Xenophon's work, see *Cyr.* 1.2.16; 1.6.17; 2.1.29; 2.2.30; 8.1.38; 8.7.12; *Mem.* 2.1.28; *Symp.* 2.18; *Oec.* 11.12 and 4.20-25.
58. Therefore, there is no reason for denying the legitimate aspect of the Median ceremonial in the name of the "Indian" episode, as Gera 1993: 291 does.
59. On the importance of hunting in Cyrus' *paideia*, and more generally in Xenophon's work, see Schnapp 1997: 144-171 and Briant 1996: 242-244.
60. A confirmation of this hypothesis is to be found in the way the whole *pompê* is organized (8.3.1-34): after the splendid ceremonial where Cyrus appears for the first time in his extraordinary dress, the king and his courtiers participate in horse races (8.3.24-25) signifying the high regard in which they hold physical activities and the care of their own bodies.

61. Italics mine. See Briant 1996: 244-246. The same dialectical relationship is found in the *Anabasis* (1.5.7-8): the army being momentarily stopped by a muddy area difficult to cross for the wagons, "Cyrus halted with his train of nobles and dignitaries (*sun tois peri auton aristois kai eudaimonestatois*)". "But it seemed to him that they took their time with the work; accordingly, as if in anger, he directed the Persian nobles who accompanied him to take a hand in hurrying on the wagons (...); they each threw off their purple cloaks (*porphurous kandus*) where they chanced to be standing (...) wearing their costly tunics and coloured trousers, some of them, indeed, with necklaces around their necks and bracelets on their arms; and leaping at once, with all this finery, into the mud, they lifted the wagons high and dry and brought them out more quickly than one would have thought possible". Faster, may we add, than a Greek would have thought, considering the luxurious clothes worn by these Persian noblemen.
62. For study of the Greek stereotyped conception of *truphê*, see Passerini 1934, Cozzoli 1980, Lombardo 1983 and Kurke 1992. In this paper, I develop a view quite parallel to Hindley's 1999, who argues that there is no total rejection of physical *eros* in Xenophon's books. Xenophon accepts a moderate or self-controlled *erôs* (a *sophrôn eros*), which takes pleasure in physical expression. One could also speak of a *sophrôn truphê*, i.e. a way of appearing and being which balanced dialectically *truphê* and *ponos*.
63. Before adopting the ceremonial, in a carefully prepared show (7.5.37-39), Cyrus lays the emphasis on deportment by showing the embarrassing situations his friends could find themselves in, if a protocol was not established: after waiting for a long time because of the crowd who absolutely wanted to see Cyrus, when his friends were able to go home at last, "[they] gladly departed, running from his presence, for they had paid the penalty for ignoring all the wants of nature (*hupo pantôn tôn anagkaiôn*)". Far from being a scene "in bad taste" (Delebecque 1978: *ad loc.*), the passage points at the necessity to establish a ceremonial which would in any event prevent Cyrus' companions from running the risk of behaving in a vulgar way (and therefore *of being despised*). Forbidding to urinate, a mere Persian custom as shown by Herodotus (1.133), is therefore dealt with in a political perspective by Xenophon.
64. Cyr. 8.8.8: "In the next place, as I will now show, they do not care for their physical strength (*oude tôn sômatôn epimelontai*) as they used to do".
65. The parallel with the *To Nicocles* (2.32) is striking: "Be sumptuous in your dress and personal adornment (*trupha men en tais esthêsi kai tois peri to sôma kosmois*); but simple and severe, as befits a king, in your other habits (*karterei d'hôs khrê tous basileuontas en tois allois epitêdeumasîn*)". Closely following Xenophon's distinction, Isocrates establishes a dichotomy between external *truphê* and internal *engkrateia*.
66. For a thoughtful interpretation of this palinody, see Tatum 1989: 215-239, and more generally, Briant 1989.
67. On this much-discussed episode, see for instance Loraux 1989: 59; on the legacy of the theme, during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, see Panofsky 1930 and ROCHETTE 1998: 106-113 (with bibliography). However, commentators usually set little store by

- Xenophon's political questioning of Prodicus' apologue: Socrates uses Herakles' case within the context of a reflection aiming at determining who is capable of ruling, and not merely in the moral terms Cynics would use to tackle the issue (*contra* Hoistad 1948).
68. For the same idea within a different context, see Hindley 1994.
 69. My interpretation is closely akin to Tuplin's 1996: 95: "The imperial end-result does represent a mixture of Median principles of royal superiority, military principles of a calculated mixture of comradeship and subordination, and Persian principles of formal education".
 70. e.g. Too 1998: 294-301 and Gera 1993: 293: "[Medes and Persians] are now alike in their dress, eating habits, aloofness from their subjects, and their attitude towards the law, self-aggrandizement".
 71. *Cyr.* 8.2.4 and 1.3.4 cannot be compared as they are by Gera 1993: 293, without similarly mentioning 8.1.36 and 38. As a matter of fact, Gera is fully aware that Cyrus does not take up his grandfather's typically Median drinking habit (1.3.10).
 72. *Cyr.* 1.3.18.
 73. See *Oec.* 9.14-15 and Pomeroy's interpretation (1994: 302-303). Evidently, the scale is very different between the *oikos* of Ischomachus and the empire of Cyrus. But the logic seems to be the same for Xenophon (cf. *Cyr.* 5.1.24 and *Oec.* 7.32-34). On the question of the *nomos empsuchos*, see e.g. Aalders 1969.
 74. It seems difficult to establish a connection between 1.4.20, 1.4.26 and 8.5.24: "*if* you on your part become puffed up by your present successes and attempt to govern the Persians as you do those other nations..." (italics mine).
 75. Astyages would be better compared to Deiokes in Herodotus (1.99): both are kings of Media and both are difficult to approach by the courtiers.
 76. For the archaic origin of this elitist tradition, see Morris 1996 : 31-36.
 77. However, we cannot say that the title was a good choice because Cyrus "remains a *pais* until his sudden transformation into an old man at the end of Book 8", as Tatum 1989: 89-91 suggests. Indeed, Xenophon writes that before setting out on the conquest of his future empire, Cyrus was a *teleios anêr*: he was therefore at least 26 years old (see *Cyr.* 1.5.4 and Tuplin 1994: 153).

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